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ABSTRACT

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A COUNSELING APPROACH TO ARMED FORCES RECRUITING

by

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Prepared for

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CAPSULE STATEMENT

The effort to emphasize enlistment as a viable occupational choice for young men and women who accept the military way of life as a means of achieving their goals is in the nature of an experiment. If this new approach is to meet the needs of young people, the educational community must, in turn, take a new approach to the services. At least, there must be a willingness on the part of counselors and school officials for closer ties and closer cooperation to exist between the educational community and the Armed Forces.

The move toward the All Volunteer Force, commencing in 1971, brought to the military services a new awareness of some of the perceptions and prejudices of high school counselors and resulted in gradual re-evaluation of high school recruiting programs. This re-evaluation was stimulated, in part, by the services' increased reliance on voluntary enlistment and their conviction that a military career offers many opportunities and advantages for high school graduates about to enter the labor market.

THE DRAFT: PROBLEMS AND PREJUDICES

The obligatory nature of the draft contributed to some of the bias against the military services. Since World War I the draft had been the most pervasive recruiting tool. About 50 percent of those who enlisted were not "true volunteers", but were motivated to enlist because of the draft. The services realized that the end of the draft would have many implications for recruiting, an immediate one being the necessity to compete in a free labor market for the 350,000 to 400,000 new personnel who were needed by the services each year.

The initial modifications in recruiting practices tended to copy the model used in industrial recruiting; an effort was made to create more awareness of the "product" and to establish a better recruiting sales force. The size of the recruiting force and the size of advertising budgets were doubled; selection and training of recruiters in interviewing and salesmanship were improved. As a result of these efforts a significantly larger number of "true volunteers" were enlisted in 1972 and

1973 than had previously enlisted.

The services were concerned, however, that the proportion of male high school diploma graduates among new enlistments fell below the proportions in the population. The services prefer high school diploma graduates to non-graduates or equivalency certificate holders because the graduates have a record of more successful performance than non-graduates. The desirability of obtaining a larger proportion of high school graduates provided another reason for the services to re-evaluate their approach to high school recruiting.

Recruiting posters dating back to World War I portray the United States and its military services in symbolic fashion as a man with a stern countenance and intimidating gesture uttering the words, "Uncle Sam wants YOU!" Perhaps this image has led many segments of American society to view the military services' recruiting efforts in somewhat negative terms. The widespread acceptance of a negative image is illustrated in a text used at the university level to train guidance counselors (Hoppock 1963, p. 46):

> "The deliberate misrepresentation employed by recruiting officers for military services has been notorious for centuries. Gullible counselors have been unwitting partners to the deception."

Another hangover from times past is the way in which many Americans perceive "joining the service" as an opposite choice to "getting a job". There has been so little public knowledge about the role of the military as an educator and employer that a young man who enlisted in one of the

services was thought of primarily as a "soldier" or "sailor" whose actual occupational activities were on the periphery of society's realm of "real work" (Brown & Callahan, 1973). Many people have not been aware of the similarities between civilian and military jobs and career opportunities because they have had little knowledge of the degree to which military work specializations have clear counterparts in civilian businesses and institutions. (Although ground combat duties have little comparability to the duties of civilian jobs, less than 20% of military personnel are in ground combat jobs.)

A NEW ENVIRONMENT: THE ALL VOLUNTEER FORCE

The end of draft calls in December 1972 prompted educators as well as the Department of Defense and the Armed Services to evaluate the implications of the new All Volunteer Force. The following statement, for example, which appeared in a publication of the American Personnel and Guidance Association in October, 1972, indicates a realization that the peace time military services would be a major employer in the labor market:

> "Because military career opportunities were presented in a recruiting context, the credibility of the materials, and the opportunities as well, was highly suspect. Further, the guidance information that was utilized by professionals to present careers in the military environment was not keyed to skill or career specialization. Rather, counselors and guidance material publishers tended to view the military establishment as an undifferentiated whole, usually referred

to as 'military career.'

> "With the inception of the All Volunteer Force (AVF) policy, the time has come to consider what the military services may actually represent: a working environment in which individuals can pursue real career opportunities on a fully voluntary basis."

NEEDED: A NEW APPROACH

Recognizing the opportunities afforded by the end of the draft, the Department of Defense began to develop a new approach to high school recruitment. In particular, the approach was based on the fact that, in a volunteer environment, the military services represent a working environment in which young men and women can receive training, enroll in educational programs for credit, pursue jobs, and move up the career ladder of their choice.

In its new approach to the high school student, the Department of Defense is testing the concept of whether a joint and coordinated approach on the common benefits of military service, the provision of accurate information on jobs, training and careers, and the guarantee of specific training courses and jobs prior to enlistment can work as well, or better than the recruiting sales methods used in the past. This new approach does not do away with the traditional "image" and appeal of each of the individual services but rather makes this service "image" supplementary to the emphasis on the common benefits which, in peace

time, all services have to offer in the way of jobs, training, education and careers.

The Objectives: Accurate, Realistic Information

The objectives of the Department of Defense in its new approach to the high school student have much in common with the objectives of career education. The Department is furnishing occupational information in a more understandable form, seeking to portray military work and service life in an accurate and realistic manner. For example, in high schools wishing to participate, the Department of Defense is implementing the following actions on a joint and coordinated basis among all of the military services:

- Publication of a single Military Occupational Source Book which covers all services.
- Distribution of military job and career information on microfilm - Armed Services VIEW
- Distribution of career films describing the world of civilian work and related military occupations.
- Development of a college level course for counselors, teachers and school officials on military service as a career.
- Use of the Armed Services Aptitude Test Battery as the single test for qualifying for entry into service.
- Participation in funding support for development of procedures and training materials for the establishment of school placement offices.

- Participation of school officials in "critique" and "feedback" on the above programs.

The career films and the Armed Services Aptitude Test Battery are already available to the high schools of the nation. Most of the other programs and actions will be implemented in the 1975-76 school year.

The Plan: The Department of Defense High School Marketing Program

All of the projects and activities just mentioned have been developed as a means of emphasizing enlistment as a viable occupational choice for young men and women who accept the military way of life as a means of achieving their goals. Combined, these projects comprise what is known as The Department of Defense High School Marketing Program. Through the development of this program, the Defense Department hopes to improve their knowledge of the kinds of information career educators need to integrate military opportunities, accurately and objectively, with civilian opportunities in high school career counseling programs.

The Link: Career Education

The career education movement, which now has become part of government policy (USOE Policy Paper, D.H.E.W., 1974), may provide a sound basis for support of the new Department of Defense program by the educational community. The overall objective of career education is to prepare all students for successful working careers - careers encompassing the entire spectrum of occupational choice.

Career education seeks to build into a student's total educational experience a conception and understanding of all levels and types of work which can be compared and contrasted to an individual's aspirations and specific career interests. Over the span of 12 years of primary and secondary level schooling, the student learns about as many vocational and academic disciplines as possible. Gradually, as the student's awareness leads to exploration of various fields which are of interest to him or her, preferences begin to develop. These personal preferences, when coupled with career orientation and guidance, help the student make a series of tentative choices of broad career "clusters", leading eventually to a specific career choice.

IMPLEMENTATION: SIX PROJECTS

The succeeding paragraphs describe the Department of Defense projects and efforts in this regard, as well as their relationship to the objectives of career education as they have been enumerated in the HEW paper.

One of the career education tasks in the HEW policy paper is for the business-labor-industry community to provide "observational, work experience and work study opportunities for students and for those who educate students." The career resource materials which the Department of Defense is making available to the high schools are related to this objective.

The Department of Defense Military Occupational Source Book

This resource book was prepared by a joint service agency known as the Armed Forces Vocational Testing Group and was developed with guidance

and recommendations from the Department of Labor. The book identifies and describes the jobs of all the services which have civilian job counterparts, together with the minimum qualifications for entry into training programs. The occupational listings are soon to be integrated into the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT), the Occupational Outlook Handbook, and the new "career cluster" system developed in the United States Office of Education, thus ensuring inclusion of military occupational information in standard guidance references used by school counselors, placement officers and U.S. State Employment personnel nationwide.

Armed Services VIEW

Another program which provides career education materials to high schools is known as Armed Services VIEW (Vital Information for Education and Work). The Department of Defense is joining an in-place system now located in thirty-four states nationwide by incorporating military related skills into a microfilm deck of over 300 civilian skills. VIEW equipment permits a student to obtain a "printout" containing information on jobs in which he or she has an interest. Schools without the necessary microviewer equipment for use with the VIEW cards will be receiving the information in booklet form.

Career Films

In September of 1974 the Department of Defense furnished to high schools in all fifty states audio visual resource materials covering the world

of work as outlined in the Department of Labor's Occupational Handbook and the Dictionary of Occupational Titles. The films were produced to fill a career awareness need in the guidance and counseling departments of the nation's high schools and are being viewed by an estimated one million students annually. Civilian careers such as clerical and technician work, electronics and public service are emphasized; only about 10% of the footage in the films is devoted to coverage of counterpart military jobs.

The above --The Department of Defense Source Book, Armed Services VIEW and the career films-- are all resource materials designed to give an accurate representation of military career information and life style. Their availability helps to meet an acknowledged need by high school counselors for up-to-date information and description of career opportunities in all the military services. In one study demonstrating that need, 80% of a nationwide sampling of high school counselors from 146 schools expressed the need for more information of career opportunities in all military services. Almost 77% of the counselors preferred a single coordinated source of military information to separate sources (Villanova University 1973).

Another of the career education tasks in the HEW policy paper suggests that "the business-labor-industry community will serve as career development resource personnel for teachers, counselors and students." Two Department of Defense programs which use service personnel in resource capacities are the Military Career Awareness Course for Educators (MILCACE) and the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB).

The Military Career Awareness Course for Educators

MILCACE began as a graduate level four-hour credit course at the University of Delaware in 1972. Designed as a summer school or evening course for high school guidance counselors and school teachers, the curriculum materials are being integrated to include a text and teaching guide which provide up-to-date information on training options, jobs and careers which are available in each of the military services. The course is currently being modified so that interested educational institutions can adapt the basic components of the course to suit their own particular faculty and campus situations. For example, while developing the course, a university faculty member may decide it would be beneficial to have service personnel serve as guest lecturers or panel members to aid in the presentation of specialized areas of military information. Although recommended course outlines are provided, the materials are flexible enough to allow each instructor to adapt the content to meet the community and institutional "givens" of his or her particular situation. At present, 47 universities and colleges are conducting courses, or are in the planning or negotiation stage.

The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery

ASVAB, a battery of nine tests developed by the Department of Defense, is used by participating high schools nationwide for both ability testing and occupational classification. In addition to determining a student's eligibility for military service, the ASVAB predicts the student's voca-

tional aptitude for both civilian and military jobs and is therefore equally useful in counseling students who are interested in civilian and military job opportunities. The test is administered and graded by trained military personnel who do not have recruiting responsibilities. Since test scores are distributed to the school guidance counselors as well as to the student and the recruiter, the school benefits by receiving a free testing service. The testing program is based on the mutual self-interests of the student, the schools and the Armed Forces.

The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery is being revised as a single service entry test so that a student who takes the ASVAB, if he or she is interested in military service, can be assured that it will not be necessary to take other tests to qualify for entry into service. On the basis of the ASVAB score, a prospective enlistee can be guaranteed his or her choice of training or first duty job assignment prior to enlistment.

A third career education task mentioned in the HEW policy paper states "the business-labor-industry community will participate in part-time and full-time job placement programs." The School-to-Work Job Placement Project is in line with this objective.

School-to-Work

In 1972 Congress supported the position that the public schools should accept primary responsibility for helping students make the school-to-work transition by enacting PL 92-318. Section 1054 calls for "job placement, or placement in post secondary occupational education programs

as a responsibility of elementary and secondary schools." The Department of Defense, together with the United States Office of Education, is aiding this effort through co-sponsorship of the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education School-to-Work Project which is currently conducting pilot training programs in 40 local school systems in 8 states, and 13 junior colleges in 8 states.

EVALUATION AND ASSISTANCE: FROM WITHIN AND WITHOUT

As all of the projects mentioned above began to materialize, it became apparent that some plan was needed to strengthen relationships with the educational community regarding these programs. Several organizations are currently working with the Department of Defense to assist in this objective.

In March of 1974 representatives from all five services established a group called the Joint Education Liaison Directors of Recruiting (JELDOR). In addition to overseeing the development and implementation of these on-going programs, members of JELDOR began formulating an overall plan to achieve their objective of making military career information available to the schools while conforming to the standards and requirements of the educational community. JELDOR meets regularly to monitor the progress of programs already underway and to exchange education liaison ideas and materials.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is an influential group of educators, including both the elected and appointed state Superintendents of Public Instruction from each state and U.S. territory. By

action of the CCSSO Board of Directors, the Council has proposed the creation of an educational/military liaison project in their Washington headquarters with both professional and clerical staff. One basic purpose of this project, as stated in the proposal which CCSSO submitted to the Department of Defense, is "to enhance the All Volunteer Force recruitment effort by establishing the mechanisms and materials for a broad based dissemination of vocational and career development information to educators of the United States. Such a project is necessary because current evidence suggests that educators' knowledge concerning the military as a trainer and employer is in many cases inadequate."

The Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) provides the Department of Defense assistance with the High School Marketing Program. HumRRO serves in a consulting capacity to the Department of Defense in review and evaluation of the program.

The Department of Defense High School Marketing Program is financed with funds available to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs). The program is under the general direction of Dr. A. J. Martin, Special Assistant for Accessions Policy (ASD-M&RA).

AN IMPORTANT COMBINATION: JOBS, INFORMATION AND COOPERATION

Two key elements of an effective career education program are (1) the kinds of jobs which present opportunities for satisfying, expanding careers and (2) the availability and accessibility of accurate, descriptive career information which helps make it possible for people to find the job they would be most likely to succeed in.

The introduction to a Department of Defense concept paper entitled "Career Training and Education in an All Volunteer Force" helps to demonstrate a recognition of the importance of the first of these elements. If the Defense Department is to achieve and maintain required military employment levels through voluntary hiring, the opportunities for productive work in the military services must continue to increase:

> "The All Volunteer Force will need to look toward a comprehensive career training and education program for all enlisted personnel to attract and retain quality personnel. Long range, there is perhaps no single incentive for retention than a well ordered system of continuous training and education which recognizes and blends both mission requirements and the career objectives of all personnel."

It is of primary importance for the Armed Forces to make available accurate, descriptive information about military jobs and careers if they are to be perceived of as comparable to, and part of, the "world of work" as a whole. The Department of Defense is experimenting with new and different ways of establishing the services as an employment opportunity worth consideration by young people who are entering the labor market. A joint effort is being made on the part of all the services to cooperate with the educational community in helping young people with their career decision making process. Basically, the new approach is one of furnishing information about military training/work/career opportunities and conditions of service life so young men and

women can intelligently consider military enlistment as an informed choice.

On the part of the services this requires a shift from "selling" on enlistment to an emphasis on "counseling" on enlistment. On the part of the educational community, acceptance and support is needed if this approach is to realistically provide young people with an awareness of career options open to them in all walks of life.

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